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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 476
By Crutchfield

A RESOLUTION To commend Reverend Harold K. Lester for his
honorable and astute service to the Orchard
Knob Missionary Baptist Church.

WHEREAS, The spiritual health and vitality of the society of this state and nation are dependent in great measure upon the contributions of those dedicated pastors and their congregations whose commitment to the work of the Lord and the advancement of His kingdom have borne great fruit over the years; and

WHEREAS, On May 16, 1966, following the departure of their pastor, the Reverend W. Benson Stephens, to serve First Baptist Church, Ensley, in Birmingham, Alabama, the Orchard Knob Missionary Baptist Church extended a call to the young Reverend Harold K. Lester, of Detroit, Michigan; and

WHEREAS, The only son of Mrs. Novella Lester and the late John D. Lester, Harold K. Lester was then a junior at Morehouse College in Atlanta; though inexperienced, he was eager and energetic, and filled with the Holy Spirit; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Lester assumed the responsibilities of pastor on June 5, 1966, and was installed as pastor on August 14 of that year; building upon the good

stewardship of the "supply ministers" that served the church during the transitional period, he eagerly embarked upon what would become a highly productive ministry; and

WHEREAS, By 1972 the church building was so in need of major repairs and improvements in order to avoid condemnation that the Orchard Knob congregation began to meet at the site of the Cosmopolitan Community Church at 1600 East Third Street; the congregation worshipped there for five years while a new edifice was constructed; and

WHEREAS, The church had a building fund of \$5,953.62 when the Reverend Lester became pastor, but by the time the church contracted to build the new structure the fund stood at approximately \$300,000; the young pastor refused the planning of any anniversary programs in his honor during the building phase, and voluntarily assumed payment of the monthly note for the parsonage at 4105 Gayle Drive; and

WHEREAS, On Sunday morning, July 3, 1977, the members of Orchard Knob Missionary Baptist Church marched into its new building at 1734 East Third Street; the structure, which stands on an 11 acre tract with 350 parking places, was completed at a cost of over \$1 million; and

WHEREAS, In November of 1987, Orchard Knob Missionary Baptist Church observed its centennial year by raising an amount in excess of that required to liquidate its mortgage; in the future the church plans the construction of a Family Life Center, additional office space and educational rooms; and

WHEREAS, The church faces its future debt free, having increased its membership to approximately 1,700 during the past 25 years; it operates a Tape Ministry and Dial-A-Prayer, sponsors a full-time missionary to Africa, and has two church buses for transporting members; and

WHEREAS, Seeking always to equip himself to better serve the Lord and his flock, Harold K. Lester went on to attend American Baptist Theological Seminary in Nashville, received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, earned a

Doctor of Divinity from Birmingham-Easonian Baptist Bible College, and has credits toward a Master of Divinity degree from the School of Theology in Sewanee, Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, The Reverend Lester's many activities include membership in the Baptist Ministers Conference, Clergy Koinonia of Chattanooga and Vicinity, the Chattanooga-Hamilton County BM and E District Association, Tennessee BM and E Convention, Inc., life membership in the NAACP and membership on the Board of Trustees of the Greater Chattanooga Public Television Corporation (WTCI Channel 45); and

WHEREAS, Harold K. Lester is fortunate to share the love and companionship of his wife, the former Curtis E. McCullough; they are the proud parents of daughter Benita Denise; and

WHEREAS, Reverend Lester has consistently set his aim upon the building of God's kingdom on earth, through the preaching of the Gospel and ministries of compassion and service; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we join the members of Orchard Knob Missionary Baptist Church in celebrating the ministry of Reverend Harold K. Lester and their journey of faith and life of service together, and salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.